

Making a Body of Work

Oct 2007

How do you respond when viewing art? Confusing chaotic display vs. organized, thought out presentation?

Most galleries ask for a "body of work", a group of related pieces that represent your work and make a powerful statement.

Even for the EBCA events we host, presenting a body of work has several advantages.

First, the impact of your 'grouping' is more visually effective to potential buyers. People are drawn in. The features of each piece corroborate the statements you are trying to make with each individual piece. By working on a related group during production, you are focusing on your art from a new and challenging perspective. Your group of pieces helps establish and identify your work as your unique 'brand'.

Secondly, producing a body of related work for a show makes the job of hanging the show easier for the gallery owner or in our case, whoever is hanging the show.

Evolving and refining our artwork, AND producing related bodies of work suitable for marketing is a challenge. But with advance planning for the event, you can focus your efforts. In fact making a body of work for a particular themed show or one of our EBCA events can be taken on as a personal challenge or exercise. Set some parameters.... Size, price, medium.... If you are a large scale oil painter, maybe consider doing mini paintings of something you've always wanted to explore.

For 2D artists this means, frame things in similar frames if possible, use similar matts, use similar media or similar subject matter. Plan what common element you want to incorporate for any particular show.

For 3D artists, depending on size of your work, make 1 or 2 groupings of pieces by function, color, shape etc. Group jewelry with similar stones
Example: flower bricks... tier down a group of three, avoid having just one of anything. Save them for a misc table or sale table during the tour, or until you've made a series of them.

I won't cover display spaces in this presentation. This is a whole topic in itself.

Gauge your body of work for the audience expected to attend the show. The purpose of our Holiday Show and Preview Tour Show are somewhat different, as is the mindset of the audience. Holiday shopping is different than presenting the best examples of your work intended to entice someone to your studio.

If you approach each event by asking yourself a few questions and setting a few criteria, you will have a direction to focus your efforts. This will result in a unique body of work that speaks to the audience and makes a statement for any audience.